



# News Release

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## **Death with Dignity Act annual report shows a 43 percent rise in participation**

**OLYMPIA** — Terminally ill adult patients have had the right to ask their physician to prescribe a lethal dose of medication to end their life since 2009 under the state's Death with Dignity Act. Nearly 550 people have acted on that right since the law went into effect.

The state Department of Health monitors compliance with reporting requirements and produces an annual report using information collected from patients and providers who participate. About 175 people were given lethal doses of medication between Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2013, according to the report. Of these patients, 153 are known to have died. Participation rose by 43 percent in 2013 from 2012.

The 173 prescriptions were written by 89 different physicians and were dispensed by 23 different pharmacists.

Those who died after receiving the lethal medications were between the ages of 29 and 95. More than 95 percent of participating patients lived west of the Cascades. Following the trend in previous years, many of the patients who received lethal doses of medication listed their concern over loss of independence as a reason for participating.

The 2013 Death with Dignity Act Report and information about the [Washington State Death with Dignity Act are on the agency website](#).

The [Department of Health website](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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